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ABSTRACT

In the summer of 1989, a survey of salary, benefits, and working conditions in Vermont's licensed child care centers was conducted. Data were collected with the amended Child Care Employee Project of California survey instrument. A total of 131 programs at 135 facilities responded, producing a response rate of 40.4 percent. The data analysis covers only the 94 centers reporting that they were open more than 48 weeks a year. These centers employ 640 staff caring for 2,914 children. This represents about one-third off all children cared for in licensed child care centers in Vermont. Sections of the report concern characteristics of reporting child care centers, wages, working conditions and benefits, staffing and turnover, reasons for staff turnover, miscellaneous findings, training needs, and responses to open-ended questions about centers' most pressing problems. (RH)

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SURVEY OF
SALARIES, BENEFITS, WORKING CONDITIONS,
INCOME SOURCES AND COSTS IN
LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTERS
VERMONT
1989

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The Child Care Employee Project of California granted the Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services/Child Care Services Division permission to use its survey instrument. We changed some of the questions and added to their survey.

October 26, 1989

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A. BACKGROUND:

The Child Care Services Division (CCSD) has an ongoing need for information on the wages, benefits, working conditions and general cost of and income to child programs in Vermont. All these issues are constantly discussed nationally, as a State in local communities and by child care providers and parents. The information is important in addressing quality, cost to parents and supply. The Commissioner of SRS requested we collect and analyze the data making it available to policy makers, child care providers and groups working to solve the complex issues facing us (parents, local, state and federal governments, providers, philanthropies and community groups). The survey will be administered yearly, the results merging with a growing body of useful national data.

B. INTRODUCTION:

131 programs covering 135 facilities responded as of 9/7/89. The survey was mailed in early July, 1989 to 324 licenced child care centers using the Children's Day Care Licensing Unit's lists. The rate of return is 40.4%. The data analysis covers only those programs reporting they were open more than 48 weeks a year (94 centers). These 94 centers employ 640 staff caring for 2914 children. This represents about 1/3rd of all children cared for in Licensed child care centers in Vermont.

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Special thanks to the Child Care Employee Project, Louise O'Brien and Buffy Nelson.

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in Licensed Child Care Centers, Summer, 1989

Characteristics of Reporting Child Care Centers

The typical responding center operating for more than 48 weeks a year has been open for 7 years, is open for services 51.4 weeks a year, serves 31 children, employs 5.8 teaching staff, and has better staff child ratios than the minimums required by Licensing.

In this center no infants are served, 3 young toddlers, 4 two year olds, 13 preschoolers, 5 kindergarteners, and 5 school age children. One of these children is a child with a handicapping condition and one child has been observed by the staff as having a significant developmental delay but has not been diagnosed as having a handicapping condition.

Approximately 62% of this center's income comes from parent fees, 20% comes from SRS (State) Child Care reimbursements and 18% from other sources such as fund raising, grants, contracts, etc.

The Child Care Center does not receive free space or reduced rent, subsidized or in-kind: staff, administrative support (legal, business management, health care advice), supplies, or staff development. The center does not receive any support from employers. It has not had difficulty obtaining liability insurance.

Table 1

Vermont
SRS Child Care Services Division
Survey of
Salary, Benefits, Working Conditions
in Licensed Child Care Centers, Summer, 1989

WAGES
FOR THOSE CENTERS OPEN MORE THAN 48 WEEKS PER YEAR

	Teacher		Assistant Teacher		Teacher Director		Director	
	hr	wk	hr	wk	hr	wk	hr	wk
HIGHEST PAID*								
Maximum	\$11.57	\$434	\$7.57	\$298	\$16.00	\$576	\$15.67	\$579
Median	\$6.00	\$228	\$5.00	\$180	\$7.00	\$270	\$9.62	\$344
LOWEST PAID*								
Median	\$5.50	\$206	\$4.50	\$150	\$6.79	\$265	\$9.56	\$350
Minimum	\$3.50	\$70	\$3.50	\$11	\$3.50	\$70	\$5.00	\$18

- * Centers were asked to report the hourly wages for the highest paid person (and the number of hours per week they worked) and the lowest paid person in the Teacher, Assistant Teacher, Teacher-Director or Director categories. We then calculated the mid point for each of the highest paid people in each category. We did the same for the lowest paid for each category to arrive at the medians.

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Working Conditions and Benefits

Working Conditions
% of Centers Offering

Benefits

Paid Break	72%	Reduced Child Care	70%
Paid Lunch	54%	Education Stipend	68%
Paid Prep-Plan	77%	Paid Maternity Leave	13%
Paid Staff Meetings	82%	Unpaid Maternity Leave	63%
Paid Training on-site	80%	Paid Sick Leave	67%
Paid Training off-site	72%	Paid Holidays	86%
Written Job Description	96%		
Formal Grievance Procedure	54%		
Written Contract	33%		
Written Salary Schedule	34%		
Annual COLA Raises	54%		
Merit Increases	67%		
OT Compensation	78%		

Number Paid Holidays Per Year

	Teach	Asst. Teacher	Teacher	Director
Minimum	0	0	0	0
Maximum	27	25	27	25
Mean	8	8	9	8

Number Paid Vacation Days Per Year

	Teach	Asst. Teacher	Teacher	Director
Minimum	0	0	0	0
Maximum	50	24	24	24
Mean	10	9	11	11

Insurance Coverage And Pension

	Not Avail	Available-----	Part Paid	Full Paid	Also to Dependents
Health	(42%)	9%	31%	18%	96%
Dental	(78%)	0%	10%	12%	100%
Life	(71%)	4%	10%	15%	100%
Pension	(79%)	4%	7%	10%	100%

Table 3

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Staffing and Turnover for Child Care Centers
Open More Than 48 Weeks During the Year

	Teacher	Assistant Teacher	Teacher Director ¹	Director
# Centers Employing	83	65	29	53
# Employed				
Minimum	1	1	1	1
Maximum	21	10	2	2
Mean	4	3	1	1
Total	333	213	34	60
Tenure (Length of Stay)				
Under 1 year	45%	69%	22%	32%
3+ years	19%	9%	50%	35%
Age				
Under 25	37%	48%	---	---
Turnover				
Annual Percent	41%	54%	35%	28%
Reason				
Performance	10%	20%	0%	12%
Enrollment	2%	1%	0%	0%
Other	0%	1%	0%	0%
Voluntary	88%	78%	100%	88%
(Other Prog)	(36%)	(20%)	(100%)	(50%)
(School)	(15%)	(7%)	(0%)	(0%)
(Unrelated)	(49%)	(73%)	(0%)	(50%)
Weeks to fill				
Under a Week	30%	26%	31%	32%
Over a Month	28%	24%	56%	57%
# Applicants	7.2	7.4	5.4	6.5
% Qualified	38%	48%	32%	49%

¹Included only if center did not also report Directors

Table 4

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Reason for Staff Turnover
(Major Reasons Are Reported in Parentheses)

	Teacher	Assistant Teacher	Teacher Director	Director
# Responding	42	30	4	13
Pay	67% (45%)	83% (57%)	75% (50%)	54% (31%)
Benefits	47% (29%)	62% (38%)	50% (50%)	38% (8%)
Policies	24% (5%)	12% (0%)	25% (0%)	23% (0%)
Work Conditions	26% (5%)	12% (0%)	25% (25%)	46% (8%)
Stress	57% (24%)	52% (18%)	50% (75%)	69% (38%)
Conflict	36% (18%)	33% (15%)	25% (0%)	15% (0%)
Health	16% (10%)	20% (16%)	25% (0%)	23% (0%)
Maternity	23% (23%)	19% (23%)	40% (40%)	0% (0%)
Move	43% (38%)	43% (32%)	0% (0%)	29% (29%)
Child Care	26% (13%)	31% (12%)	0% (0%)	8% (0%)
Other Personal	73% (32%)	77% (55%)	60% (40%)	73% (47%)
School				
Early Childhood	15% (10%)	12% (4%)	25% (0%)	8% (8%)
School				
Elem. Ed.	6% (3%)	0% (0%)	0% (0%)	15% (0%)
School				
Other	14% (11%)	12% (12%)	25% (0%)	8% (8%)

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Other Interesting Results

40 of the 94 centers are tax exempt (43%).

83 centers (88%) reported no difficulty obtaining liability insurance
7 reported difficulty; 4 did not respond to the question.

Median fees charged to parents for all categories of care for those
centers not using a sliding fee scale were the same as state
reimbursement rates.

35 of 94 centers (37%) do receive a subsidy or in kind donations -
space (free or minimal rent).

22 reported volunteer staff, support with administration (23%).

17 received assistance with supplies (18%).

29 received assistance with staff training (30%).

26 reported support/contributions from employers (28%).

17 reported receiving support in the form of space

9 reported receiving support in the form of staff

17 reported receiving support in the form of administration

15 reported receiving support in the form of supplies

12 reported receiving support in the form of staff development

7 reported receiving support in the form of other

The reported median dollar value of funds that would have to be
raised if the subsidies and/or in kind contributions from all sources
were discontinued was \$20,000.

Summary of Training Needs Identified

Child development and care giving skills, including discipline
and behavior management were most frequently sighted as a training
needs (23 times). (In addition, CDA training was requested three
times.) College level teacher training was mentioned separately as a
need (8 times) indicating that experienced teachers want an
additional professional challenge.

A surprise was the large number of programs wanting first aid
training (20 respondents). Seventeen programs indicated a need for
training in business and program administration.

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Responses to Open Ended Questions

After they had worked their way through the detailed questions on salaries, staff turnover, rates charged, etc., survey respondents were asked to reply to: "What are three good things you'd like us to know?" and "What are your center's three most pressing problems?". All but a very few respondents answered one or both of the questions.

One director described that center's three most pressing problems as "Money, Money, Money", and most responses to the question echoed that concern. If there were more money available, most programs would first invest it in their staff. "More money to pay decent wages to attract good staff", "Money to pay decent wages to keep good staff", "Money to provide staff benefits", "Money to hire more staff so we can spend more time with each child", "Money for better staff training" were typical remarks. Many persons cited a lack of qualified applicants for staff positions, and several noted that this lack of qualified personnel makes it difficult to provide the necessary services to enroll children with special needs in a mainstreamed setting. Many directors also mentioned a need for more and better space (or new space), and for money for materials. Many respondents referred to the fact that though more money is needed, they are also aware that parents cannot afford to pay more. One director said "We are trying to find ways to cut our cost per child without jeopardizing program quality", but there was general agreement that new sources of financial support are required, and the need for constant fund raising was cited as a problem.

In spite of the problems, no one answering the survey seemed to have any difficulty thinking of three good things. Child care providers told us that they like their job, and the children and parents with whom they work; they are proud of the quality of their programs; they have stable, caring staff members, and a good relationship with their community. Several people described the rewards of operating integrated, multi-age programs and of successfully meeting the needs of some very challenging children. Directors spoke of supportive boards and deeply involved parents. Some looked outside their programs to praise their local Resource and Referral/Training programs as helpful and supportive, and even state regulations received positive comments. One director mentioned the national Act for Better Child care as a positive development.

Perhaps the best summary of all comments, positive and negative, was made by the director who observed "Quality child care is still making it, though it is rough financially!".